

★ LESSONS 103 & 104: THE SOUND OF Ē̃ (AS IN HER & EARN)

24 Target Words • Tilde Diacritic • Suffix -er

1 Lesson 103 — Stressed Monosyllables: Copy each word carefully, place the tilde (~) over e, and write neatly. 12 Words • Stressed /ɜ:r/

▶ fĕrn n.	▶ vĕrb n.	▶ clĕrk n.	▶ vĕrse n.
▶ nĕrve n.	▶ sĕrve v.	▶ wĕre v.	▶ tĕrm n.
▶ stĕrn adj.	▶ ĕarn v.	▶ ĕarth n.	▶ lĕarn v.

2 Lesson 104 — Disyllables with -er: Sound the unstressed final syllable (/ər/), mark ē̃, and write. 12 Words • Unstressed /ər/

▶ toil·ē̃r n.	▶ call·ē̃r n.	▶ work·ē̃r n.	▶ ev·ē̃r adv.
▶ nev·ē̃r adv.	▶ prop·ē̃r adj.	▶ hov·ē̃r v.	▶ cov·ē̃r v./n.
▶ spell·ē̃r n.	▶ oth·ē̃r pron./adj.	▶ moth·ē̃r n.	▶ broth·ē̃r n.

3 Orthographic Detective: Explore the tilde diacritic, the “ear” phonogram, and agentive suffix -er. Phonics • Morphology

The Tilde Diacritic (ē̃)
The wave mark (tilde) shows **e** modified by **r** (/ɜ:r/).
Neither short ē̃ (bed) nor long ē̃ (be). The letter *r* curls the vowel into the sound heard in **her**.

Digraph Team: ea = ē̃
In **earn**, **earth**, and **learn**.
The team *ea* + *r* takes the exact same sound as *er* in *her*.
Silent letter combinations require careful visual memory!

✓ **Agentive Suffix: -er**
Turns an action verb into the person who performs it:
toil → **toiler**, call → **caller**, work → **worker**, spell → **speller**.
Notice how the base word stays intact!

4 Sentence Synthesis & Dictation: Write sentences combining words from both lessons in your best penmanship. Applied Writing • 26px Standard

Prompt: Combine at least one word from Lesson 103 (e.g. earth, learn, verse) and one from Lesson 104 (e.g. mother, worker, speller). 6 Penmanship Lines



1. Comprehensive 24-Word R-Controlled Matrix (Lessons 103 & 104)

Stressed /ɜːr/ vs. Unstressed /ər/

Word	Marked	IPA	Lesson	Category	Orthographic Analysis & Socratic Focus
fern	fērŋ	/fɜːrŋ/	L. 103	Botanical noun	Base phonogram er; r-controlled monophthong.
verse	vērse	/vɜːrs/	L. 103	Poetry noun	Silent final e prevents single s looking like plural marker.
were	wēre	/wɜːr/	L. 103	Past plural verb	Irregular high-frequency verb; historical long vowel shortened.
earn	ēarn	/ɜːrŋ/	L. 103	Action verb	Digraph team ea = /ɜːr/ before r. Labor theme.
verb	vērɪb	/vɜːrɪb/	L. 103	Grammar noun	Latin <i>verbum</i> (word). Core grammatical term.
nerve	nērve	/nɜːrv/	L. 103	Anatomy noun	Silent final e following v (English words never end in v).
term	tērŋ	/tɜːrŋ/	L. 103	Academic noun	Latin <i>terminus</i> . Definite period or designated word.
earth	ēarth	/ɜːrθ/	L. 103	Cosmic noun	Digraph team ea + voiceless digraph th (/θ/).
clerk	clērɪk	/klɜːrɪk/	L. 103	Trade noun	Historically rhymed with <i>dark</i> (/klaːrk/) in Britain; /ɜːr/ in US.
serve	sērve	/sɜːrv/	L. 103	Moral verb	Rule: final e after v. Service and duty vocabulary.
stern	stērŋ	/stɜːrŋ/	L. 103	Adjective	Initial blend st-. Meaning strict or the rear of a ship.
learn	lēarn	/lɜːrŋ/	L. 103	Cognitive verb	Digraph team ea = /ɜːr/. Essential academic core word.
toiler	toil-ēr	/ˈtɔɪlər/	L. 104	Agent noun	Diphthong oi (/ɔɪ/) + agentive suffix -er (one who toils).
ever	ev-ēr	/ˈɛvər/	L. 104	Temporal adverb	Short ē in initial open-accent syllable; terminal /ər/.
hover	hov-ēr	/ˈhʌvər/	L. 104	Motion verb	Short o sounded as /ʌ/ (schwa-like) before v.
other	oth-ēr	/ˈʌðər/	L. 104	Pronoun/adj.	Short o = /ʌ/ + voiced digraph th (/ð/) + unstressed /ər/.
caller	call-ēr	/ˈkɔːlər/	L. 104	Agent noun	Ball-rule phonogram all (/ɔːl/) + agentive suffix -er.
never	nev-ēr	/ˈnevər/	L. 104	Negative adverb	Old English <i>ne</i> + <i>æfre</i> (not ever).
cover	cov-ēr	/ˈkʌvər/	L. 104	Action verb	Short o = /ʌ/ before v; rhymes with <i>hover</i> .
mother	moth-ēr	/ˈmʌðər/	L. 104	Kinship noun	Short o = /ʌ/; medial voiced th (/ð/).
worker	work-ēr	/ˈwɜːrkər/	L. 104	Agent noun	R-controlled root <i>work</i> (/ɜːr/) + agent suffix -er (/ər/).
proper	prop-ēr	/ˈprɒpər/	L. 104	Moral adjective	Latin <i>proprius</i> . Short ō in closed accented syllable.
speller	spell-ēr	/ˈspɛlər/	L. 104	Agent noun	Doubled ll (Floss rule) + agentive suffix -er.
brother	broth-ēr	/ˈbrʌðər/	L. 104	Kinship noun	Initial blend br-; short o = /ʌ/; medial voiced th.

2. Orthoepic Clinic: Why the Tilde (ê) Matters in 1901 Phonetics

Historical Orthography • Diacritic Hierarchy

The Wave Mark (Tilde): Wheeler uses the tilde (ê) to show that the vowel is neither short (béd) nor long (bē). The following r colors and widens the vowel into /ɜːr/. Marking ê trains children to recognize this unique phonemic category without confusing it with short e.

The Kinship Cluster (mother, brother, other): Notice that in *mother*, *brother*, *other*, the letter o represents short u (/ʌ/), while the terminal -er carries the unstressed tilde sound (/ər/). Contrast with *hover* and *cover*, which share the exact same vowel pattern.

3. Decodable Dictation Sentences (Reinforcing Ê and Suffix -er)

Oral Dictation • Syntax • Applied Phonics

1. "Mother and brother were eager to **learn** every **verse** of the poem." (Focus: were, learn, verse, mother, brother • stressed & unstressed ê)

2. "The faithful **toiler** will **earn** his bread honestly upon the **earth**." (Focus: toiler, earn, earth • ea=ê team, dignity of labor)

3. "A **proper** **speller** will **never** fear a **stern** **term** or hard test." (Focus: proper, speller, never, stern, term • agentive and academic words)

4. "Hovering birds **cover** their nests when cold winds **serve** to chill the air." (Focus: hover, cover, serve • short o=/ʌ/ before v, silent final e)

5. "No **caller** will **ever** find a true **worker** idle in the field of **ferns**." (Focus: caller, ever, worker, fern • agentive suffix -er, nature vocabulary)

4. Evaluative Scoring Rubric & Socratic Discussion Guide

20 Total Points

Tilde Accuracy (5 pts)

Correct placement of tilde (~) over e in both monosyllables and terminal syllables.

Digraph Mastery (5 pts)

Flawless spelling of the ea team in *earn*, *earth*, *learn* without omission.

Suffix Structure (5 pts)

Understanding agentive -er (verb + -er = person performing action).

Penmanship & Syntax (5 pts)

Legible letterforms on 26px lines; midline consistency; correct capitalization.

Socratic Inquiries for Oral Language: • *Phonics:* How does the sound of e change when the letter r follows it? Say *bed* then *fern*. What did your tongue do? • *Morphology:* If a person who toils is a **toiler**, what do we call someone who paints, sails, or teaches?